



BACKGROUND STATEMENT ON NATIONAL WORKSHOP FOR  
EXTENSION HOME FURNISHING SPECIALISTS\*

I. Why a workshop?

A tremendous improvement in farm, rural, and city houses, furniture and home furnishing, has been going on and will probably continue while income remains relatively high and stable. Differences in city and farm homes are quickly disappearing. There is a growing concept that the house should be planned and furnished for functional living.

Coupled with these far-reaching changes, there is a revolution in the kinds of furniture and furnishings industry is offering consumers. There is an urgent need for the home furnishings specialist to become more aware of the kinds of furniture and furnishings industry is putting on the market, such as dual purpose and combinations in low-cost furniture, including plastic furniture. Also, plastic curtains and other plastic items; glass, nylon, and orlon curtains; nylon, rayon, and cotton rugs; foam rubber mattresses and upholstery padding; and cushions, to mention only a few.

Many of our extension specialists are far removed from large urban centers where they could have easy access to information on the construction, use, and care of new materials and what the market has to offer, yet the rural homemakers ask them for this type of information.

The 4-H Home Improvement Program is expanding. Many young couples rely on advice from the Extension Service in selection and care of home furnishing, as do also other families that have to make major or minor home furnishing decisions.

II. Workshop purposes.

- (a) To bring specialists up to date on home-furnishing subject matter.
- (b) To investigate market resources and secure from the trade latest consumer information on use and care of new furniture and home furnishings.
- (c) To exchange, develop, and improve specialists' techniques and methods of helping agents and leaders.

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III. Extension Organization and Policy Committee Action.

(a) At the June 1952 meeting the committee made the following recommendations:

"A motion was made by Director Sanders, seconded by Director Clayton, to approve regional home furnishings workshops in 1953 if, in the judgment of regional directors, such is needed. It was recommended that consideration be given to interregional workshops because of the limited number of specialists and the need to meet in trade centers where commercial experience could be brought to bear on the problems. The Federal office is asked to assist with plans and programs."

(b) Director Deering, as chairman of the In-Service Training Committee, reported as follows regarding this conference:

"Requests of long standing have been received for authorization to permit the home furnishing specialists to arrange for a workshop. Our committee recommends approval of regional home furnishing workshops in 1953, when such may be approved by the Director. The appropriate person or persons in the Federal office should be consulted regarding programs and plans."

(The Organization and Policy Committee agreed that two regions could combine in one workshop if such seemed advisable.)

IV. Attendance at workshop.

It is estimated that 65 State specialists would be eligible to attend a national workshop. The program should, however, be planned primarily for the 32 specialists assigned to full time work on home furnishing.

The breakdown by States and types of specialists follows:

21 States employ 32 full-time specialists whose project is home furnishing.

20 States and 2 Territories employ 29 specialists whose title is home management but who carry home furnishing work in addition to home management.

4 States employ 4 specialists whose titles vary but who carry home furnishing programs.

6 home economics specialists employed in 4 States who are assigned to house planning, remodeling, or architectural work are not included.

( 3 )

V. Planning Committee.

Director M. L. Wilson has appointed the following planning committee and has written to State directors concerned inviting State specialists' participation as follows:

Mary Louise Collings, Field Studies and Training.

Eunice Heywood, Field Coordination.

Alice Linn, Subject Matter.

Gertrude Humphreys, West Virginia, representing State home demonstration leaders and the Extension Organization and Policy Committee.

Mrs. Ruth Comstock, New York, 1952-53, chairman of the home furnishings specialists' group.

Pauline Gordon, North Carolina, representing the South.

Alice McKinney, California, representing the West.

Dorothy Iwig, Illinois, representing the Central region.

Ruth Jamison, Virginia, 1951-52 chairman of home furnishing group.

Mary Rokahr, chairman, in charge, Home Economics Section.

VI. Time and place.

Final decision regarding time and place should be decided by the planning committee through correspondence.

The Federal staff members recommend a 2-week workshop to be held either April 20-May 1, 1953, or May 4-May 16, 1953.

After weighing carefully the advantages and disadvantages of two regional workshops versus one national workshop, we recommend a national workshop to be held at Chicago, since there are excellent market facilities in Chicago and travel costs to all the States will be more equalized. It would also cost less to get an adequate staff and a better staff can be obtained if only one workshop is held.

VII. Time and place of planning committee meetings.

The Federal members of the committee think only one meeting of the planning committee will be necessary -- probably in December 1952 or early January 1953 -- to help in making program decisions. This meeting can be held in Washington or the Middle West to save travel costs of State staffs attending. There would be no other cost to State representatives on the planning committee.

The first of these is the fact that the total number of cases of the disease has increased in the last few years. This is due to a number of causes, the most important of which are the following:

1. The first cause is the fact that the disease is now more common in the tropics than it was formerly. This is due to the fact that the climate in the tropics is more favorable to the growth of the parasite.
2. The second cause is the fact that the disease is now more common in the cities than it was formerly. This is due to the fact that the population of the cities has increased, and the conditions of life are more favorable to the growth of the parasite.
3. The third cause is the fact that the disease is now more common in the army than it was formerly. This is due to the fact that the army is now more numerous, and the conditions of life are more favorable to the growth of the parasite.
4. The fourth cause is the fact that the disease is now more common in the navy than it was formerly. This is due to the fact that the navy is now more numerous, and the conditions of life are more favorable to the growth of the parasite.
5. The fifth cause is the fact that the disease is now more common in the merchant marine than it was formerly. This is due to the fact that the merchant marine is now more numerous, and the conditions of life are more favorable to the growth of the parasite.

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